

Can. p. 43; Bolle, J. für Orn. 1855, p. 177, and 1857, p. 344; Vern. Harc. Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. ser. 2, 1855, xv. p. 438.

These three species are found in all the archipelagoes, and must undoubtedly breed in the Desertas or other neighbouring islands, as I saw them there in considerable numbers in the month of June. I failed to procure specimens.

85. *MERGULUS ALLE* (Linn.).

Alca minor, W. & B. Orn. Can. p. 41; Bolle, J. für Orn. 1855, p. 177.

Like many other sea-birds, this species is said to be more numerous in the eastern Canaries, though found occasionally throughout the group.

The above list comprises all the birds at present known to be resident or regular migrants in the Canaries and Madeira*. In a future paper I hope to make some further remarks upon the general features of the ornithology of the Atlantic Islands.

XXVII.—*Ornithological Observations in the Crimea, Turkey, Sea of Azov, and Crete, during the Years 1854–55; with Remarks on the Sivash, or Putrid Sea.* By GEORGE CAVENDISH TAYLOR, F.Z.S., late of the 95th Regiment.

THOUGH I have had this article in contemplation ever since our Journal was first started, a variety of causes have hitherto prevented me from carrying my idea into execution. These must be my excuse for introducing it to the readers of 'The

* Since the above article was in type my attention has been drawn to the bird described by Dr. Finsch as *Pyrrhulanda modesta* (J. f. Orn. 1864, p. 412), which is stated to be found in the Canaries. Though Dr. Finsch adheres to his opinion as to the distinctness of this bird from *P. nigriceps* of Gould, from the Cape-Verde Islands (see Trans. Zool. Soc. vii. p. 275), Dr. Cabanis takes the opposite view (J. f. Orn. 1868, p. 219). I have no further information to impart respecting the species, but must express the opinion that, as Dr. Finsch cites no authority in giving the Canaries as the origin of the single female specimen he described, it may turn out that the species is not Canarian at all, though it is by no means impossible that a species of *Coraphites* may be found in the islands of Fuerteventura and Lanzarote.

Ibis' so long after date. The thirteen published volumes of 'The Ibis' contain no article treating of the localities I visited; nor am I aware that any ornithological notes on the birds of the Crimea have ever been published, except those of Lieutenants Blakiston and Irby, in the 'Zoologist' for 1857, and of Dr. William Carte, in the 'Journal of the Royal Dublin Society' for February of the same year. The observations of these gentlemen were confined more or less to the camp before Sevastopol; while mine, as I shall presently show, had a much wider range.

I had fortunately rare opportunities and great facilities for moving about and visiting the localities to which I shall allude.

My first arrival in Constantinople was from Egypt and Malta, on the 21st of March 1854. After remaining there two months, I returned to England. I went out again in October, and reached the Crimea on the 26th of that month, the morning after the battle of Balaklava, and took up my residence with the Second Division. There I remained until several days after the battle of Inkerman, when I went to stay on board the 'Agamemnon,' in which ship I experienced the destructive gale of the 14th of November. On the 29th of that month I went back to Constantinople.

In January I again visited the Crimea, proceeding thence to Eregli (or Heraclea), on the coast of Asia Minor. In February I went to Khania, in the island of Crete, on board the 'Trent' steamer (since famous as having been the ship from which the Confederate Commissioners, Messrs. Mason and Slidell, were *lifted* by Commodore Wilkes), on an expedition to buy mules for army transport, these same mules being the foundation on which the Land Transport Corps was afterwards built. In another steamer, and on a similar expedition, I visited Ismid, on the Sea of Marmora. But the most satisfactory excursion I made, and the one most prolific of ornithology, was when, in May, I was so fortunate as to accompany the expedition to Kertch, and go with the allied squadron through the Sea of Azov, on board the 'Stromboli,' then commanded by my lamented friend Captain Cowper Coles, since lost with the turret-ship 'Captain,' who kindly asked me to accompany him on that most interesting trip, the pleasures of which I shall

never forget. In my subsequent notes I shall have occasion to enlarge upon it.

I passed the greater part of the following summer in the camp, making occasional visits to Constantinople, but was present to witness both the unsuccessful attack of the 18th of June, and the capture of Sevastopol. I managed to enter the city early on the morning after it was evacuated by the Russians. I made my final departure from the Crimea on the 25th of September.

The three gentlemen to whose notes I have alluded above appear to have remained during the winter of 1855-56 and the following spring, when there was comparatively little or no restriction on their movements up to and beyond the outposts. They were consequently enabled to extend their observations into localities which it was impossible to reach during the progress of hostilities; and therefore their notes, so far as the vicinity of the camp is concerned, are much more valuable than mine; for during the siege it was impossible to pass the outposts, and even at times very dangerous to approach them, as it generally happened that independent ball-practice was going on between them and the Russians.

Before concluding my preliminary observations I wish to make a few remarks on the "Sivash," or, as our maps call it, the Putrid Sea. When I was in the Sea of Azov, I could obtain no information concerning it; and it seems that the Russians themselves have but little to impart. The 'Stromboli' steamed, close in shore, along the whole length of the Spit of Arabat; but the haze and mirage so common in this region prevented our seeing to any distance from the ship.

I know of no existing account of it, except the article by Captain Sherard Osborn, R.N., "On the Geography of the Sea of Azov, the Putrid Sea, and adjoining Coasts," in the 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society' for 1857, from which I shall give a few extracts. Captain Osborn commanded the 'Vesuvius' in the Sea of Azov, and only visited a portion of the Sivash, that nearest to the Spit of Arabat. "Of the other portion," he says, "we shall not presume to speak, no English naval officers having visited it during the late operations, and

the information gleaned from the Russians being of that vague condemnatory character that justified one in believing that they might be as incorrect in their opinions and inferences as to its character and the insalubrity of its shores, as they appeared to be ill-informed of the capabilities and physical character of that portion of the Sivash which extends from Ghenitchi to Arabat."

* * * * "In that water-space, like every other portion of the Sivash seen by us, where devoid of reeds, it was clear, blue, and sparkling, as if the depth of its waters equalled that of the Atlantic." * * * *

"The northern basin of the Sivash is divided from the southern one by a central area, which bears far more, in its usual aspect, that morass-like character which the general reader would be inclined to impute to the term Putrid Sea."

* * * * In this solitude [the inlet of Changkoi] breed vast numbers of wildfowl; and all the summer long we found Muscovy Ducks† and flocks of Divers frequenting the lagoons."

* * * * "The rapid evaporation—the extraordinary mirage from the heated atmosphere playing over the surface of this area in a summer day was very striking; and between sunrise and sunset at that season of the year it was as utterly impossible to distinguish objects but a mile or so distant upon it as it would be had a cauldron of boiling liquid been there in its place. There are roads through these morasses, only known, however, to the Tartars and smugglers, who are ever at war with Russian custom-houses and tax-gatherers." * * * *

"We suffered from nothing but the offence to the sense of smell; and some of our vessels were months breathing the tainted air. * * the smell was like decayed vegetation mixed with a peculiar odour not unlike gas-water, from which I infer there are bituminous vents in the Sivash * * the exhalations from which give the name of Putrid to this sea." * * * *

That birds should breed in such a salt marsh is very remarkable, as showing that their food is there to be found. "The Muscovy Duck and Common Diver or Shag fed and bred in the Sivash in vast numbers; and in the shoal water and

† [What species is here referred to? Surely not *Cairina moschata*.—Ed.]

marshes abreast of Chongar Strait, in which we spent a broiling day, we could see abundance of weed, as well as shoals of young fish."

Now here is some new ground for the adventurous ornithologist, where he will find Waders and waterfowl in abundance, to say nothing of other kinds of birds. The locality is easily accessible by way of Odessa and Kertch; and in May, when the birds are breeding, the climate is very pleasant, and not too hot; and, according to Captain Osborn's experience, the air of the Sivash is not unhealthy. I will promise that he will not meet with any drawbacks half so dangerous and disagreeable as the fevers, bad food and lodging, and ferocious insects of the tropical back regions.

He may extend his visit to the sandy spits of the Azov, and, I have no doubt, will return with a collection of skins and eggs which it will be hard to beat. For more detailed information of these localities I must refer him to Captain Osborn's article above mentioned, or to my own 'Adventures in the Crimea,' which, I believe, contains the only existing account, except the letters and despatches published at the time in the press, of the capture of Kertch, and the first and principal raid of the allied squadron through the Sea of Azov, and the attacks on Ghenitchi and Taganrog.

I will now proceed to the notes on the various birds observed by me. Unless otherwise stated, the designations are from 'Yarrell's British Birds,' 2nd edition.

Griffon Vultures (*Vultur fulvus*) were abundant in the vicinity of Sevastopol; and no wonder, considering the quantity of food provided for them, and which they could obtain without risk or trouble. I well remember, when returning from Balaklava to the camp in the dark afternoons in November 1854, how enormous they appeared when seen against the sky-line, perched on the bodies of the numerous dead horses lying on the plain—victims of the battle of the 25th of October. The Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) is abundant in and about Constantinople in spring and summer. They sit on the roofs of the houses, and breed on the ruined walls and towers of Stamboul.

I saw Sea-Eagles (*Haliaëtus albicilla*) frequently in Balaklava Bay, where the lofty cliffs afforded a suitable refuge for them. I also observed several fine adult birds with white tails near Koslou, on the coast of Asia Minor, where there are also lofty cliffs. Both the common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) and the Lesser Kestrel (*F. cenchris*) were common about the ravines leading from the camp to Sevastopol. They were eaten by the French whenever obtainable. Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*, Bodd.) were most abundant about Constantinople, breeding in the trees in the courts of the mosques, where they are never disturbed by the Turks. I noticed several nests on the same tree. I saw the Marsh-Harrier (*Circus æruginosus*) on the extensive marshes near Ismid, on the Sea of Marmora. I remember seeing Owls in the dusk of the evening in and about the camp in the Crimea, but never obtained a specimen. My list of Raptores here ends, and is certainly scanty, my attention having been chiefly devoted to the game-birds and water-fowl.

Both the Lesser Grey Shrike (*Lanius minor*, Gmel.) and Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) I found abundant in the spring of 1855 near the camp, and also the Barred Warbler (*Currucanitoria*). My principal hunting-ground was on the battle-field of Inkerman, especially in the ravines, where a good deal of scrubby bush still remained. I was usually followed by French soldiers, who acted as retrievers, and darted into the bushes to look for the slain as soon as the gun was fired, often very much to the detriment of the specimen.

The Blue Rock-Thrush (*Petrocincla cyanea*) I saw in Crete; the Golden Oriole (*Oriolus galbula*) was common in the Crimea, though I do not remember seeing any. I saw some, however, in the vicinity of Constantinople.

In Crete I saw the Stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*), and the Wheatear (*S. ænanthe*) in the Crimea. When I went, on the 4th of May, with the first expedition to Kertch, which returned without effecting a landing, several examples of the Willow-Warbler flew on board the steamer I was in. A Nightjar, a Hoopoe, several Redstarts, and Doves also came on board.

The Great Tit (*Parus major*) was observed at Constantinople.

I never saw the Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrula*) in the flesh ; but a skin was given to me by Mr. Churchill, of Pera, then, if not now, the editor and proprietor of the 'Turkish Gazette' (the 'Djeridé Havadis'), who had a collection of birds of the vicinity, and from whom I obtained many specimens.

A Wagtail (*Motacilla*), the Crested Lark (*Alauda cristata*), and the Goldfinch (*Carduelis elegans*) were all observed in Crete ; and near Constantinople, and in the Crimea, I saw the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and Magpie (*Pica caudata*). Grey Crows (*Corvus cornix*) and Jackdaws (*Corvus monedula*) were noticed near Constantinople. The Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*) I found in the Crimea. When on the passage from Malta to Alexandria, in November 1853, three Rooks alighted on the rigging, and were shot. They came from the north, and were evidently bound for Africa. Wagtails, Pipits, Chaffinches, Redbreasts, and a Golden-crested Wren also came on board.

The Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*) is abundant during the spring migration. I note having seen as many as thirteen in one day about the camp, and four of them together. Rollers (*Coracias garrula*), too, were also abundant about the camp. The soldiers used to call them Parrots. I shot one while sitting on the limekiln down in the large ravine leading from the Inkerman battlefield to the Tchernaya bridge. In this limekiln 340 Russians had been buried. I followed another ; but it led me up to the French outposts, who were then keeping up a brisk fire with the Russians ; so, not feeling inclined to be made game of, I returned home to skin the birds I had obtained, by no means an easy task, having to sit on the ground, with the bird on my knee, and a penknife my only implement. Under such circumstances it is difficult to produce good specimens, especially when the skin has to be put away and crushed before it has time to dry.

Bee-eaters (*Merops apiaster*) were seen in the Crimea, and also at Koslou, in July, breeding in colonies, like Sand-Martins, in the river-banks. The Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Martin (*H. urbica*), and Swift (*Cypselus apus*), were observed in the Crimea, and at Constantinople. The Alpine Swift (*C. alpinus*) was abundant in the Crimea, breeding in the cliffs. They were constantly to be seen flying in flocks, over and about the camp ;

near St. George's Monastery was a great resort for them. Plentiful as they were, it so happened that I was never able to secure a specimen. I also saw them at Koslou. In Constantinople they are common, and may be seen any summer's day wheeling round the Galata tower. Nightjars (*Caprimulgus europæus*) were common in suitable localities about the camp. One day I was out on the Inkerman battle-field, when one of these birds rose from under a bush. I was about to pull the trigger, when a Zouave, whom I had not seen, jumped up in a line with the bird; I just managed to miss both of them, the former not without difficulty.

Turtledoves (*Turtur auritus*) were common in the Crimea. I saw them in flocks between the camp and the trenches. Doves, probably *T. risorius*, as well, are also abundant in Constantinople, frequenting the forests of cypress trees which cover the Turkish cemeteries. I heard of Rock-Doves being in quantities along the cliffs near Balaklava, but I do not remember seeing any. There are Domestic Pigeons in enormous quantities at one of the mosques in Stamboul, the name of which I now forget. When food is thrown for them, they descend in such dense masses that I have seen them two or three deep in their eagerness to obtain it.

Pheasants (*P. colchicus*) I never saw wild; but one day I met a man walking down the Grande Rue de Pera with a live Pheasant in a trap under each arm. They were frequent items in the bill of fare at Misserie's Hotel, and were no doubt caught at no great distance. I take this opportunity of saying that the market of Constantinople, or, more properly speaking, Pera, the Frank quarter, is well supplied with game. I have seen Wild Boars, Roe-Deer, Hares, Bustards of both kinds, Pheasants, Red-legged Partridges, Woodcocks, Snipes, Bitterns, Pintails, Shovellers, and various wildfowl. Fish are also abundant; I noted Mussels, Oysters, Crawfish, Lobsters, Mullet, Swordfish, Mackerel, Turbot, and large and most brilliantly coloured Gurnards.

I remember seeing a bird (I believe it to have been a Francolin) which had been shot in the spring of 1854 by an officer of the Guards, then encamped near Scutari. It was of the

same size and, as well as I can recollect, of similar plumage to a Francolin ; but I had no opportunity of examining it closely.

I need hardly say that Quails (*Coturnix vulgaris*) are common everywhere at suitable seasons. I shot them in Crete in February. Large flocks were about the camp in September 1855. An officer of Engineers shot sixteen brace one morning close to Balaklava. They were fine game for the French officers, who used to go out *en grande tenue*, and not unfrequently with swords on as well as guns.

I have already mentioned both species of Bustards (*Otis tarda* and *O. tetraz*) as occurring in the markets of Pera. Towards the close of 1855, after I had left the Crimea, *Otis tarda* was frequently obtained in the camp. Golden Plovers (*C. pluvialis*) and Lapwings (*Vanellus cristatus*) both occurred at Constantinople and Ismid. When on the expedition to Kertch I saw a large flock of Cranes, of what species I cannot say, passing over the ships, and high up in the air. Herons (*Ardea cinerea*) were observed at Constantinople, Ismid, and Crete ; and though I never saw Purple Herons (*Ardea purpurea*) in the flesh, I have a skin of one given to me by Mr. Churchill. The White Heron (*Ardea alba*) occurred at Ismid, also in Crete. White Storks (*Ciconia alba*) were common in the outskirts of Constantinople. The Curlew (*Numenius arquatus*) was seen at Ismid ; the Whimbrel (*N. phaeopus*), too, according to Mr. Churchill, occurs near Constantinople. The Green Sandpiper (*Totanus ochropus*) I saw at Koslou, in July. I saw Woodcocks (*Scolopax rusticola*) at Constantinople, also in the Crimea. I remember flushing one in the thick outer scrub on the ground where the battle of Inkerman was afterwards fought. Snipes (*S. gallinago*) are common near Constantinople ; and I was credibly informed that good sport was to be had on the Karasu river, not far from Buyuk Chekmedji. They were abundant in the great marsh near Ismid—also in the salt marsh at the head of Sudha Bay, in Crete, not far from Khandia. The Jack Snipe (*S. gallinula*) I found in Crete ; I also killed several in the above-named marsh at Ismid. The Coot (*Fulica atra*) occurs at Constantinople, and is abundant near Ismid, in large flocks.

I saw Swans, Wild Geese, and Pelicans, I cannot say of what

species, during the bombardment of Ghenitchi by the allied squadron on the 29th of May, 1855. They were evidently bewildered by the heavy firing, and after flying round a few times, made off to security and quiet in the marshes of the Sivash. The Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) occurs in the Crimea; and the Shoveller (*A. clypeata*), Pintail (*A. acuta*), Garganey (*A. querquedula*) at Constantinople. Teal (*A. crecca*), Mallard (*A. boschas*), and Wigeon (*A. penelope*) I found abundant in the marsh near Ismid. It was ground most difficult to walk on, consisting chiefly of rushy hillocks, with deep water between them, and intersected in all directions with streams, just too wide to jump over, there being no firm ground on either side. It is a famous haunt for wildfowl. The water at the edge of the bay is quite shallow. Loopholed boxes have been erected on posts, at some little distance from each other, evidently to enable the natives to indulge in *la chasse aux canards* with as little trouble and discomfort as possible. Here I saw also Tufted Ducks, Great Crested and Eared Grebes, and Pelicans, also numerous footmarks of Otters, and I tallyhoed a Fox out of some high rushes. I was sorry not to be able to remain longer in this locality.

Of Red-Crested Ducks (*Fuligula rufigula*) I have a skin from Mr. Churchill's collection; the Pochard (*F. ferina*) occurs near Constantinople, and is also common in the Bay of Eregli, near Koslou. The Tufted Duck (*F. cristata*) is common in Eregli Bay, and also at Ismid. In January I killed three by one shot in Balaklava harbour, also a Smew (*Mergus arboreus*) in immature plumage.

Great Crested Grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*) and Eared Grebes (*P. auritus*) I found plentiful in the Bay of Eregli and at Ismid, and killed many for the sake of their skins. My mode of procedure was to take a caique, with a couple of rowers; and I found little difficulty in getting within range. I have always found, when in pursuit of diving waterfowl, that, if they are wary, the best mode of obtaining a shot is to fire at them out of range. The bird then, instead of diving, usually puts up its head, and looks out inquiringly, giving time for the boat to approach much nearer. When within fair distance, if the shooter aims well before and under the head, no bird can dive

quick enough to escape the shot of a good percussion gun. I speak from years of experience in shooting waterfowl. At one time, when I followed punt-shooting with a large gun, I had become from long practice so adroit in stopping cripples, that I could kill them by moonlight, by aiming at the splash they made on rising to the surface, before they had time to dive again. My difficulty with the caïquejis was that they talked incessantly, and alarmed many birds which I should otherwise have obtained. Having no interest in the sport, and being naturally lazy, they soon got tired of it, and would not exert themselves at the right moment. Sluggish rowers are useless for such work.

I one day met a French soldier, on his return to camp, carrying some Grebes, which he had shot in the Tchernaya with a Russian musket. I ventured to express a doubt as to whether they would be good eating, upon which he assured me that I was mistaken—that they were “poules d'eau” and “bien estimés.” Still I doubt if they proved as good as the cat which on another occasion I met two French soldiers swinging between them, on their way from Sevastopol, and which they told me they intended for a ragout.

Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) and Shags (*P. graculus*) were abundant in the Crimea. I remember one day especially, in January 1855, when the harbour of Balaklava was alive with them, probably owing to some unusual influx of fish. They were flying to and fro among the rigging of the ships, and diving close alongside, and were very tame. I killed four, in two shots, for the sailors of the ‘Oscar,’ in which ship I was then living, who wanted some fresh meat. I hope they liked them, and found them as good as the Frenchmen did the Grebes. For my part, I should think Cormorants and Turkey Buzzards (*Cathartes aura*) were about equal in flavour.

When I was on board the ‘Agamemnon,’ then anchored off the entrance of Sevastopol harbour, flocks of Cormorants used to string along every evening to roost, in such multitudes that I might have taken them for Brent Geese, had I not been mindful of Colonel Hawker’s maxim for distinguishing the difference under such circumstances, viz. that the former have longer necks and tails, and occasionally cease to flap their wings as they fly.

They were equally, if not more abundant in the Sea of Azov, which swarms with fish; and the long sandy spits, so remarkable a feature in that sea, are most suitable to their habits. Captain Sherard Osborn observed them breeding in the Sivash; and Captain Blakiston remarks ('Zoologist,' 1857, p. 5678) "that the numbers of these birds about Balaklava must be greatly increased at the commencement of winter." This accession of numbers is no doubt caused by the birds frequenting the Sea of Azov being driven out of their summer haunts by the annual formation of ice in that sea.

I saw a few Pelicans at Ismid; but the Sea of Azov is where I found them in the greatest abundance. Immediately after the capture of Kertch and Yenikalé, the allied squadron proceeded with all speed to Berdiansk, on the north coast of the Sea of Azov, in pursuit of four Russian war-steamers which had escaped from Kertch, and which on their arrival were burned by their crews. The squadron anchored off the lighthouse at the end of the Berdiansk Spit, fully six miles from the mainland. The boats were hoisted out and armed, and proceeded to destroy a number of small vessels which were anchored inside the Spit. I obtained a seat in the 'Stromboli's' gig, which was sent ahead of the other boats to sound. The whole shore of the spit was covered with birds in thousands, all Grallatores and Natatores. I particularly observed Terns, Redshanks, Sandpipers, and Plovers; but of what particular species I had no opportunity of judging, as at that time shooting at any thing smaller than a man was forbidden. The Cormorants were in dense masses, sitting on the sandy beach, and, owing to the effect of the mirage, appearing at a distance as large as men—so much so that many on board the squadron thought they were Russian soldiers, and expected a warm reception. There were also flocks of Pelicans in great numbers, and so tame that they would hardly make way for the boats to pass. One might almost have touched them with a boat-hook. They evidently were not accustomed to be molested. It was a rare opportunity for an ornithologist to see so many of these magnificent white birds at such close quarters; but my attention was soon directed to other things. The attraction the spits offer to these birds is no

doubt the quantity of fish which frequent the shallow water; and on this and the other spits in this sea were establishments for the catching and curing of fish for the supply of the Russian troops. These establishments consisted of huts built of lath and reeds, boats, heaps of nets and other implements of the craft, together with quantities of fish already cured, and hanging on scaffolding to dry in the sun. All these we proceeded to fire and destroy; and a tremendous blaze they made. The sailors then commenced shooting pigs and fowls, firing their muskets in the most reckless way, to the imminent danger of all around.

The fish were of small size and very bony. We brought some on board, and found them tolerable eating, making a change from the salt junk and biscuit on which we were living.

These spits extend a long distance from the mainland. They are covered with reeds, and are full of creeks and lagoons, and are of course well suited to the habits of Grallatores and Natatores. I shot several Sandwich Terns (*Sterna cantiaca*) near Eregli. I have already stated, above, that Terns of various species were abundant in the Sea of Azov. The Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) is generally to be seen in the Golden Horn at Constantinople. The Shearwaters I saw may be the species called by Messrs. Elwes and Buckley (Ibis, 1870, p. 336) *Puffinus yelkouan*; but my specimens answer better to the species described by Thompson (Birds of Ireland, vol. iii. p. 413) as *P. anglorum*. Probably both are to be met with. Any way, no one can be long on the Bosphorus or Dardanelles without seeing these birds. They are always passing up and down, flying close to the surface of the water. Only twice during more than a year's residence in Turkey did I see them resting on the water. Once I saw a flock settled, and swimming about near the Leander tower, opposite Scutari; and again I saw a very large flock settled on the sea, which at the time was very calm, when passing through the Greek archipelago. There is no difficulty in obtaining specimens. One day in July I was staying at Therapia, and wanted some; so I took a caïque, and went so as to intercept their line of flight. They came in rapidly succeeding flocks, passing close to the boat. Out of two flocks I got five birds—quite as many as I wanted. On

being lifted they vomited a clear oil. This seems to be the experience of every one. I was told that they breed on the Cyanean rocks (the Symplegades) at the Black-Sea entrance to the Bosphorus. I planned an expedition to these rocks, but was unable to carry it into execution.

There is plenty of ground and opportunity in Turkey for a sporting ornithologist. Wildfowl are plentiful, and comparatively tame. There are Snipes and Woodcocks in all suitable localities. Two officers of Engineers, who went on a surveying expedition previous to the arrival of the allied troops, told me that they saw abundance of Grey and Red-legged Partridges and Bustards not far from Gallipoli, also quantities of wildfowl near Buyuk Chekmedji and along the Maritza river and near the Gulf of Enos.

XXVIII.—*On the Nidification of certain Indian Birds.* Part I.

By ANDREW ANDERSON, F.Z.S.

BURNESIA LEPIDA, Blyth, = *Malurus gracilis*, Rüppell (according to Blyth)*.

I first became acquainted with this interesting little bird in April 1871; but although it was far from uncommon, I found it very local, and confined entirely to the tamarisk-covered islands and "churs" along the Ganges. From dissections made it was evident that these birds were then breeding: and any doubts there may have been on this score were speedily removed; for shortly afterwards I saw young fledgelings being fed by the parent birds. I need hardly say that the acquisition of the nest and eggs of this diminutive bird was looked forward to with no small degree of pleasure; but, unfortunately, it was then too hot for me to work at the subject personally, and the matter was left in the hands of my native collectors, with the usual unsatisfactory results.

This season, having returned from my cold-weather tour somewhat earlier than usual, I devoted my mornings to exploring the islands, determined to become possessed of this desideratum; but fresh difficulties had to be overcome. Not only had the river

* Cf. Blyth's "Identifications of Synonymy," Ibis, 1865, p. 44.